

contribution for the building of a Brethren church in Washington, D. C.

After prayer the meeting adjourned.

BESSIE W. PERRY, Sec.

THE RELATION OF THE LOCAL SOCIETY TO THE GENERAL WORK OF THE S. S. C. E.

VIANNA DETWILER

This relation may be stated in a few words, after which statement I shall take the liberty to branch out on one particular line under this head, a special feature of the work that I find needs developing in our societies.

The relation the local society sustains to the general organization is most vital; the local S. S. C. E. is the life of the national S. S. C. E.; without the societies which are organized in our churches the national society could not exist.

In the first place the members that constitute the national organization, that is the national officers, are taken from the local societies. Since the home societies (then) must furnish or supply the general organization with material for its officers, how important then to have our S. S. C. E. members, thru-out the sisterhood, grow spiritually strong, likewise grow educationally, to have them become trained workers in the home society, so there may be a larger and better band of workers from which to select our national workers. They are supposed to be the leaders, supposed to be stronger by virtue of their being chosen for a national office, yet we have no assurance of better national officers than what can be raised up and trained in the home societies. The relation financially between the two organizations is also close; the general work depending almost entirely upon the local societies to supply its treasury. Yet this financial relation, when compared to the relation the local society bears to the home church, seems very slight indeed, being only twenty cents a member annually, which means for the general treasury, on an average only a tenth of the whole amount raised in a year.

When thus considering the vital relation which the local society bears to the national work, it impels us to seek how to connect the organizations more closely, how we may cause the local society to recognize this important relation, which it holds to the general work; to make them realize that the two organizations are inseparable. How shall we lead the societies to feel this relation strongly? Is not the answer that first comes to your minds simply this: By increasing the interest of the societies in the general S. S. C. E. work. But how may this be done? How shall we increase our interest in the S. S. C. E.? This question suggests the double purpose of the Sister's Society of Christian Endeavor—the support of a national, as well as the home work; it also implies, that some of our S. S. C. E. members are not as interested in the one as the other, that they do not take the proper interest in the national cause. To sustain the general work should be the primary aim

of every home society and not that they may first meet the demands of their own local church, which is only the extent of the work of the organization called the Ladies' Aid Society. It is human to be most interested in one's self; to supply our own needs first, to seek our own welfare; it is divine to seek the welfare of others first. 'Tis quite natural for societies to look out for the needs of their home church, therefore it is easy to interest them in the local work of the S. S. C. E. To look out for the home needs, is right and good, if at the same time the national work is not neglected, but otherwise wrong and selfish. The first condition of interest in anything is a knowledge of the object to be considered. The more you hear of any matter of note, the more interested you become in it.

The first part of the answer to the question, as to *how* we shall increase the interest of the S. S. C. E. in the general work is to learn what the national cause is, to find what it embraces, its breadth, depth and height—in short to study the three fold object of this fund which represents the general work of the S. S. C. E. First, the support of the Theological Department of Ashland College. Second, the support of general mission. Third, the support of superannuated ministers.

If the importance of these three objects can be impressed on the minds of the people, and they can be made to feel the need of supporting them, then you have gained their interest and the cause will be sustained. The first will mean more ministers; the second, to keep them in the field; the third, not to let them suffer want in old age. Yet strongly as these appeal to you and to me they are not sufficient to awaken an interest in some hearts, hearts of those who are wrapped up in self. Some can only be reached by first awakening in them a deeper spiritual life, the development of which is the primary aim for which our S. S. C. E. has been organized. The stimulus for this can be found at the regular devotional meetings, which may frequently consist of Bible readings and consecration services, for it is when in communion with the Father of light that we receive the divine nature, the Spirit of Christ.

The Christ Spirit without a doubt is a missionary spirit, and it is upon this zeal for world-wide missions that much of the interest in the general work depends. Once the members hearts become burdened for the lost of the entire world, when they shall be as much concerned for the unsaved souls abroad as at home, then their interest in the general work will not lag; for it is one of the objects of the general fund to support missions, and this fund gives a channel thru which they may give vent to their missionary zeal.

The spiritual life thus imparted thru consecration and prayer brings not only greater zeal for missions, for lost souls everywhere, but will also impart the Divine nature to such an extent that we shall no longer delight most to aid in our home work, but when the

order of things will be changed and we shall no longer follow the impulses of the natural heart, our first thought will be of others, of the general work. Then we can understand how it is more blessed to give help than to receive, then we will also see how it is self-seeking to be interested only in the local work, to the exclusion of the national cause.

Anything that will arouse our interest in the national work will have a like effect in the local. The latter may be regarded as a part of the former and should be looked upon as simply a means to sustain the general cause. One more help to suggest. The pastor is, or should be, the person of greatest influence over his people. Let him use his power in this direction, surely he sees the great need of a larger ministry, surely he feels the weight of the S. S. C. E. cause. Let him impress the same thought upon the minds of his people. Let every congregation hear a sermon on "Our College and the Church." And when the annual sermon (this being a custom in some churches) in behalf of the sisters work, is given, let the sisters be led to see how their support of the Bible department of the college, will mean souls for Christ which they, even by their sewing, have helped to win, thru the ministers now in training at the college. But preaching the most eloquent sermons along this line often fails to awaken that interest, preaching simply the "go" gospel will do the work more effectually. If the duty of obeying God's word, even to the going into the uttermost part of the earth, be taught the sisters from the pulpit, together with the presenting of the awful condition of the heathen world today, then we should indeed be on a fair way of increasing the interest of our S. S. C. E. in the general work. When once we have a real live interest in the salvation of the whole world then surely we'll be interested in the salvation of any part, whether it be those of the Pagan religion, on our own friends. Then as never before will we work to strengthen every department of the home church. Then we'll be far more interested in the college, because there is where our foreign mission work begins, where our missionaries will necessarily have to be trained. Then there will be a real interest in the general work of the S. S. C. E., because the important part of the general fund is used to help to educate our young ministers and missionaries.

"Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only." "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations."

Our Young People

GIVING, A MEASURE OF LOVE—Mk. 12: 41-44

Topic for Oct. 29. (A meeting to consider systematic and proportionate giving.)

There is a good story published in the form of a tract called "Thanksgiving Ann," which tells of a devout colored lady a cook, who persisted in regularly laying aside a tenth for the Lord in spite of the discouraging remarks of her master. One day when the family came to dinner it was late and when brought in was only a scanty lot of scraps. The